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The Centenary of the King's Chapel Liturgy.

SERVICES ON SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1885.

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The Centenary of the King's Chapel Liturgy.

DISCOURSE BY Rev. HENRY WILDER FOOTE

AND

ADDRESS BY Rev. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, D.D.,

GIVEN IN

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King's Chapel, Sunday, April 12, 1885.

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Mrs. Samuel F. Morse,

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The usual order of Morning Prayer was followed, the service being read by the pastor of the church, assisted by Rev. Andrew P. Peabody, D.D. Dr. Peabody also offered a special prayer: —

God of our fathers and our God, we thank Thee for the blessed memories of this hour and of this holy place. We recall with gratitude those who once worshipped here and who now adore Thee in Thy more intimate presence, in the company of Thy redeemed. We would bear in loving remembrance the venerable and saintly men who have here taught Thy truth, and whose lives, in their beauty of holiness, bore witness to its divine power. May all that was worthy of enduring honor in the fathers be reproduced in those who have entered into their heritage. May we be followers of them who leave the record of their loyalty to their Lord and Master; and may their felt sympathy and communion bring us ever nearer to Him in whom, though dead, they live. May they who now worship here cherish and transmit with pious care the trust bequeathed to them by those who have passed into the heavenly sanctuary, and be it their constant aim and endeavor to adorn the gospel of their Saviour by the consecration of their lives to the service of God and man. We offer our prayer in the name of Him who hath led us unto Thee, through whom to Thee be our gratitude and our praise, now and forevermore. Amen.

SERMON.*

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."— II. TIM. i., 13.

"The ancient landmark which thy fathers have set."— PROV. xxii., 28.

I HAVE to speak to you to-day of a subject which ought to be of peculiar interest to every one who is interested in this ancient church; and I wish, if I can, so to speak of it that it may not seem to be merely a subject of antiquarian curiosity, but may suggest thoughts really helpful to the religious life of the church to-day. It is a hundred years since, at Easter, 1785, the liturgy, which has ever since been in use here, was given to King's Chapel by those who had been intrusted with the care of revising the Book of the Church of England, to which until the Revolution we had belonged. This, therefore, seems the best time to celebrate so marked an event in our history, although the formal adoption of the book was delayed till after discussion and temporary use of it experimentally, and yet further by delays in printing. Here, then, we pause, to-day, by this "land-mark which our fathers have set," and ask what lessons it has to teach us. One thing is certain: unless we respect and value it ourselves, we can hardly expect others to respect and value it.

* A few paragraphs are repeated from a discourse given elsewhere on another occasion.

Another thing is also certain: to inherit a treasure is to inherit a trust.

You will recall that, two years ago, we commemorated here the beginning of the ministry of Rev. James Freeman, who in the two years following led his people to the changes in religious opinion of which the Revised Prayer-book was a result. Although he is ineffaceably associated with every step of these changes, I shall therefore not dwell to-day on his life and character; and I omit to do so with the less reluctance, because his grandson, Dr. James Freeman Clarke, will come to us presently from his own church service, and will say a few words to you about that good and true man. I will only remind you, as we pass, that the inscription on this memorial bust of him records that "Dr. Freeman was the first Unitarian preacher in this city; and he adorned the doctrine he professed by his Christian simplicity, purity and faithfulness, by the benevolence of his heart and the benignity of his manners. Respect for his talents and for the courageous honesty and firmness with which he maintained his opinions was mingled with love for his mildness and affectionate sympathy. In theological attainments there were few, and in the qualities which endear a minister to his people there were none, to surpass him."

The subject which we have to consider to-day suggests thoughts concerning

1. The historical affinities and affiliations of the King's Chapel;

2. Concerning the value and service of a liturgical form of worship; and

3. Concerning the special place which such a church is called to fill in the community.

I can of course touch only briefly on the large subjects which open out before us under each of these heads.

The position of King's Chapel, historically and ecclesiastically, is peculiar to itself in some important respects. It has a double and blended inheritance, while the other churches about us have but a single one. It mingles a special strain from each of two sources,—from the Church of England, whence it originally sprang, and from the Church of New England, whose air it breathed, and by whose influence, a century ago, it was profoundly modified.

We touch, peculiarly, a great historical past. In our noble liturgy, whose strains seek to perpetuate the hallowed tones of a reverend past in such a form as "no Christian, it is supposed, can take offence at, or find his conscience wounded in repeating"; * in the very atmosphere of this house of prayer, which no stranger ever enters without feeling those associations which gather where men have worshipped God and brought their deepest feelings and their holiest thoughts for five generations,—may I not say, also, in the religious habits which this church has fostered, sober and quiet, yet sincere, devout, and strong in those who have been its most characteristic fruit and ornament?—in all these, I say, the method and the temper of the Established Church of the mother country, to which until the Revolution we wholly belonged, have been transmitted to us, disincumbered of much which was derived from ecclesiastical tradition, and not from the New Testament.

On the other hand, the polity of King's Chapel became Congregational two years after the adoption of

* Preface to the edition of 1785.

the new liturgy, in 1787, when, with all friendship and good will to all other churches, and especially to those which had before been in the closest relations with it, it yet decided to ordain Mr. Freeman after the manner approved by the New England churches, instead of waiting indefinitely at a bishop's doors, as if only his commission could empower a man, however endowed or called by the spirit of God, to preach the word of life.

This step involved hard and painful things, the memory of which it is not necessary now to revive. One common error ought, however, to be corrected. The connection of this church with those of the American Episcopal Communion has often been misunderstood, as if it had *apostatized* from that communion to its present independent position. In fact, however, this church claims never to have broken the historical chain which links it to the Anglican Church, from which it sprang; and that the changes in its liturgy and methods were made as lawfully as the changes made by those other sister churches, also formerly of the Anglican communion, which associated themselves together, after the Revolution, as the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. In the historical order, King's Chapel antedated those associated churches in each step of the alterations made by them.

Forty years after, Dr. Freeman himself gave the following account of the course of these events: —

> About the close of the year 1784, when the Established Church of England no longer existed in the United States, and there was no King nor Bishop nor spiritual Court in the land to interdict freedom of inquiry, but every individual Christian and every congregation could, unless they violated the civil laws, do what was right in their own eyes, a liturgy was prepared by a committee of the church from the Book of Common Prayer.

From the beginning of my ministry, when I was reading the Book of Common Prayer, I omitted certain parts of the service,— The Absolution, the Prayer for the King's Majesty, the Prayer for the Royal Family, the Prayer for the High Court of Parliament, and the Creed of Saint Athanasius. Afterwards, when I became fully convinced that the Athanasian faith was not agreeable to the Word of God, I omitted or changed certain parts of the Litany, which I could not conscientiously read, even before the new edition of the Prayer Book was completed.

The first step in the alteration of the Book of Common Prayer was a sermon delivered from the pulpit Nov. 14, 1784. It was not written without previous thought; and, like other human beings who are disposed to speak on subjects which occupy their minds, the preacher had thrown out his thoughts in words, when he was conversing with his intimate friends. But there was no plan laid by them or by him, and nothing like a plot. One event succeeded another with the utmost simplicity; and in a *short* time, if measured by months, but a *considerable* time, if measured by days, a new edition of the Prayer Book, with alterations, was printed and introduced into the church.

This liturgy contradicts no doctrine whatever of the English Church, and in particular not its essential and fundamental doctrine, — that "the holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, and whatsoever is not read therein, nor can be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

But though this liturgy "excluded all recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity, as being erroneous and unscriptural, the congregation still continued to regard themselves as Episcopalians, and desired to remain in connection, if possible, with the other Episcopal churches."* In the document, written after the lapse of forty years, which has just been quoted, Dr. Freeman wrote: —

The alterations made in the Book of Common Prayer were not intended by ourselves, in whatever light they might be viewed by

* Greenwood, History of King's Chapel.

others, as a publick manifestation of dissent and secession from the Church of England or any other church. The Church of England had expired amid the flames of the Revolution; but we expected, or at least hoped, that a new and more beautiful Church would arise from its ashes,—an American Protestant Episcopal Church, which should be purified from all the puerilities, superstitions, and corruptions of the old establishment. We wished to become a part of this Church, and even of one which was less pure, provided we might be allowed to omit those parts of the Liturgy which we could not conscientiously read. After the protest of Messrs. Parker, Montague, and others; and after such excellent and wise men as Bishops White and Provost had suffered the opportunity which presented itself to pass by, of making a more thorough reformation in the Liturgy, our expectation became cold, and our hope was nearly extinct. We do not now suppose that any concessions will be made to us.

So, then, this church was bidden to stand apart, not without hard language and harsh thoughts on the part of others; but, so far as I know, without a single bitter word in answer from the minister or the congregation, not one which gives cause for regret, when seen across a century's space.

What was the character of this change in our words of prayer? Our Book of Common Prayer, as thus adopted, was substantially the same as it now stands. Its most significant omissions and changes from the liturgy of the Church of England as it had been used here (besides leaving out everything which referred to the English crown and church) were in those phrases which related to the doctrine of the Trinity. By this act, the church took a distinct and unequivocal position, and based its worship on the Scriptures only, refusing to accept the unscriptural additions of later ages to the primitive faith. This was an act of simple loyalty to their convictions, which placed them in opposition to much around them. Their faith was evil spoken of,

their name of Unitarian was made a synonyme for infidel. "A congregation of Mussulmans" they were called by those who did not care to inform themselves what their belief really was, and the reasons for it. Six Episcopal ministers of the neighborhood issued a sort of excommunication of Mr. Freeman; and, though some of the Congregational ministers were friendly to him, it was years before he could preach in any other pulpit in Boston. And so, as every brave act brings some penalties with it, King's Chapel was forced for a time, against its will, into an isolation very distinct from a Christian independence, which shut it out from useful Christian co-operation,—an isolation which, by narrowing the opportunity of usefulness, can never benefit a church, and whose necessity, we may well rejoice, long ago ceased.

Our liturgy, then, is a double and most interesting inheritance. It is the child, by regular descent, of the primitive worship of the Christian Church through the Church of England. And it is the child of the Revolution, and bears the impress of that tremendous movement in our national life. It was formed when the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States did not yet exist, but only a number of scattered and independent churches which had belonged to the Church of England. A little later, acting on the same principle,—that *some* revision of the old forms was necessary,—those other churches made a prayer-book, as this society, exercising their Christian right as an independent church, had already done. But the Revolution was potent even with the conservative Churchmen of the Middle and Southern States. The first general convention of the Episcopal Church frankly acted on the fundamental principle which this church had fol-

lowed in the reform of our book. The committee appointed by that convention to make the needful changes was instructed (*not* to alter, but) "to prepare" different services; and the majority insisted that it "ought to be formed without reference to any existing book, although with full liberty to take from any whatever the convention should see fit." And, in point of fact, their book did differ in several important points from the English service, notwithstanding the known wish of the English bishops to the contrary, notably in omitting the Athanasian Creed. In many points, not doctrinal, they departed from the earlier forms where these were retained in the King's Chapel book, and some of these have just now been restored in the proposed revision of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer.

Our liturgy was adopted, substantially in its present form, in 1785, four years before the authorized book of the "associated Episcopal churches" came into use. Its chief departures from the English book were: the change of the *Gloria Patri* into the Scripture ascription, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever, Amen";* the omission of all direct addresses to Christ or their change into prayers to the Father through him, obediently to his own command; and the change of the Absolution pronounced by the priest into a prayer for absolution. The Apostles' Creed was retained, excepting two clauses. The Communion and Burial Services remained with little alteration, less than in the other occasional services. The Psalter was printed entire; but the verses which savored of the Old Testament in curses and threatenings were printed in italics, to be omitted in public reading.

* I. Tim. i., 17.

The later editions of the book have each undergone alterations, while leaving the substance of the book unaltered. In 1811, the Morning Service was shortened, the Apostles' Creed was omitted, and further changes were made, of a doctrinal character, which were later again restored to their earlier form by Dr. Greenwood, to whose "pure taste and fervid devotion" our present book owes much. As we look back at the alterations which were made a century ago, they commend themselves, in the main, after a century's use. There are, however, marked exceptions, which were due to the taste of the eighteenth century, and which it seems to me are to be regretted. They do not affect matters of doctrine, and I would thankfully see them restored. A detailed study of the alteration of phrases, here and there, would be curious, if our time allowed. But it is sufficient now to say that the important point which was sometimes forgotten was the principle that, in a book of public worship, alteration should be made with great slowness in all phrases where it is not imperatively demanded for religious veracity. Especially the changes in the Psalter in the King's Chapel Liturgy, although made with the idea of giving a clearer translation, are open to the criticism of having too much disregarded this fundamental canon.

Many of these alterations, however, were made subsequently to the first change a hundred years ago. I wish to speak with the perfect frankness which you have a right to claim from me. The result of such study of liturgical subjects as I have been able to give is an ever-increasing regret on my part that some things which were introduced at the instance of Dr. Freeman's younger colleague in 1811 still have remained in the book, which seems to me nobler and more reverend in

its original form. Things were omitted then, such as the Apostles' Creed, the most touching sentence of administration in the Lord's Supper, and some beautiful sentences in the Prayers, which had been used here for nearly forty years, from 1785 to 1811, after the revision of the book, and whose omission then wounded the feeling of not a few worshippers. I could wish that, when so much was restored again by the pure taste of Dr. Greenwood, these also could have been given back to our worship. I regret also that the earnest desire of Dr. Peabody in 1850 failed to restore to us in its original form the sublime hymn, the "Gloria in Excelsis," which certainly we have a right not to lose in its old, beautiful form any more than the "Te Deum."

And, on the other side, it ought to be recognized that there might yet be changes made which would bring the book into closer sympathy with the larger, sweeter temper of our own time. Thus, that phrase in the litany which asks to be delivered "from the wrath of God" has probably disturbed the feeling of not a few worshippers, who yet feel profoundly the solemn thought which underlies that ancient form of words. Perhaps an alternative form in such a case would be a relief. My own feeling is that any changes in the book, if ever made, should be governed by the principle to adhere as closely as possible to the language of the New Testament. The Scripturalness of our Book of Prayer is its strength; and experience has proved that the safety of a form of prayer is in conforming it as closely as possible to the language of the Bible, which is so much more familiar and more sacred than any other words.*

* "This edition has been undertaken under a deep conviction that our Prayer-book needed no further changes. Our disposition has rather been to restore what might seem in any case to have been parted with without necessity, rather than to

But, after all is said of criticism or suggestion, the book remains our treasure. Its value is shown by the fact that it was not only borrowed from us by the First Church in this city, but that it has been embodied in other books of devotion, which are used by hundreds of churches in England and America, although it is not properly credited, and disappears from sight as a distinct part in these books. This is a great mistake, as it seems to me, on the part of their compilers, because it weakens the bond of historical association, which in this country especially needs to be strengthened as an aid to religious life. In view of these associations, as well as of the need of a more compact and serviceable form of our liturgy, it may well be asked whether we could do better than to commemorate this rounded century of its existence by a Centenary edition which would fitly mark our recognition of its significance and value.

innovate further. Under this feeling, the title is now The Book of Common Prayer,— the true name as borne on the title-page of our venerated mother, the Church of England, and as confirmed by the vote of our fathers, in 1785. No words, it seems to us, can more fitly express the nature of the volume. It is its pride and its glory that it is a form of service in which all may partake, and therefore common to all,— that while it is of an excellence in diction and style equal to the highest requirements of the cultivated intellect, it is of a simplicity and plainness adapted to the unlearned and youthful mind. As reformed by us, it is still more entitled to such a name, for many of those questionable points of doctrine whose admission excludes in the Prayer-book of the English Church, are omitted by us, and not suffered by their intrusion to mar the harmony of our common supplications, in which we wish to feel that every Christian might unite.

"Another motive has withheld us from any temptation to change. We feel that in the very antiquity of the Book of Common Prayer, deriving its origin from a period of at least a thousand years ago, and in parts, perhaps, even from the apostolic age, there is something too valuable to be willingly let go. There is a wealth of association derived from ages of Christian history through which this book, or parts of it, have been the medium of Christian devotions, which we are by no means willing to resign. It is our fervent prayer that it may long remain efficient to unite the hearts of Christians of the present and coming ages with the generations that have passed away, Christians of this country with those of Europe, and, more than all, Christians of various creeds with one another and with the great Head of the Church."— *From draft of proposed preface to the edition of* 1850.

Here, then, we have a Book of Prayer which is at once history and worship. It has been in use here longer than the English Prayer-book of Charles II. had been in use when the Revolution came.

In freeing the service from doctrinal subtilties and difficult propositions of theology, that generation in this Church did a memorable service, not only to their own consciences, but also to the cause of purity of Christian worship. For these are things which do not properly belong in prayer. To be informed about them is well, — nay, may be most important,— but the introduction of disputed propositions in *prayer* is to bring in what is foreign to the purpose of that great act of the soul. That purpose is, supremely, communion in worship, communion of feeling in the worshippers, communion in spirit with the living God. Aspiration, petition, thanksgiving, belong in it, and the grateful recognition of that Name of names through whom we are bidden to pray, but not the dogmatic statements which have divided Christendom for ages and can never unite it. As we join in the beautiful simplicity of our form of worship, we should rejoice that it contains nothing at which any disciple of Jesus Christ can feel himself obliged to refuse assent and suddenly thrown with a jar out of harmony with his fellow-worshippers. The party distinctions which rend Christendom in sunder are forgotten in it, and the name of Christian alone is known.

Now, of course, it may be said that this inheritance has its danger. Those who do not like liturgies will tell you that they do not foster, but rather hamper the highest spiritual life; that people may use them as crutches, and not as wings; that they may come to feel that religion is shut up between the covers of a prayer-

book; that they may be unable to pray at all in the living sense of that word, with a cry straight from the soul to God who hears and answers. A liturgy may be formally used, certainly; and, when it is so, formalism reigns supreme. But they who hold that it is necessarily formal simply ignore the facts of human experience in countless instances of saints who have prayed with the book as well as beyond it and above it. I am inclined to believe that this liturgy of ours is most formal to those who know least about it, perhaps have never looked through its pages from end to end at all, to see what treasures of devout thought and religious suggestion they contain.

It is further said that the use of a fixed form operates as an opiate, and is soporific to one's nice sense of perfect truthfulness in every word that we take upon the lips. Here, too, a possible danger is doubtless indicated. But there is a wide and just distinction, it seems to me, to be made between liturgies and liturgies. They are to be interpreted in the spirit of their makers and of the Church that uses them. In the hierarchical churches, the forms of worship are pervaded by doctrinal statements whose meaning is known, whose statement is clear, and whose vital importance is insisted on by the authorized standards of those churches, but which hosts of those who use them disbelieve,— to their moral hurt, it must be said. But the principle which lies at the foundation of the liturgy used here is essentially different. It is that the forms of public prayer should not be saturated with doctrinal points of difference between Christians, but should be as broad in their statement as the New Testament itself. The words of our public prayer should therefore be used by you in that spirit, and tried by that

comprehensive standard. But is it still said that, in thus emphasizing the New Testament, we still make a dogmatic test? I answer, In one sense, doubtless, we do. We do so, when we meet in any way as Christians at all. But what rule so positive yet so elastic, so Christian yet so broad, can be laid down as that which is based on the sacred Books of our religion and on the golden age of Christianity? If within these limits, in the language of Scripture hallowed by the sacred usage of Christendom, on the broad lines of faith and of devotion which the Gospel lays down, men cannot pray together, then there would be nothing for it except either silence or making the minister a law both to himself and his congregation.

There are those, too, who will tell you that there is the danger, in an institution which has a history behind it, of becoming fossilized. It may be used, doubtless, so as to take the life out of it, as a curiosity to be respected but not to be frequented, as an antiquity with no modern function, as too sacred to be improved and too ancient to be made to bear with power on this modern world. But so may anything be misused by the careless and indifferent. Those who take the institution at its true worth, however, will surely feel that the associations which do them good are good for others also,— that the solemn, serious, yet inspiring chord which this church sounds by its presence and atmosphere and influence in this busy nineteenth-century Boston ought to be as clearly heard with its grand appeal as the deep note of the great bell in our church-tower is heard above the feeble tinkle of more trivial noises and the roar of life forever pulsating past these doors.

From the other side, no less, we may be told that

there is a real evil in the Congregational idea on which our method of church administration is based. The Congregational polity is what its name indicates, simply that system of ecclesiastical order by which each church is independent of every other so far as government or dictation is concerned, subject to God alone, whose Spirit of Truth is able to give light and grace now, as of old, to churches ordered after the pattern of the primitive churches as disclosed to us in the New Testament. On this principle, New England was founded and grew and flourished: it is not too much to say that Congregationalism is the very corner-stone of America. It framed the institutions which in due time blossomed into life in a free land. New Englanders, at least, ought to speak well of the polity and of the principle; for there are very few of us, native and descended here, who do not come of ancestors who held the Congregational order very dear, and who felt that they owed to it most of the best things which they transmitted to their descendants. I am not concerned now to discuss the Scriptural and historical arguments on which the forefathers of New England based the Congregational polity. Formerly, the whole question was largely that of the interpretation of certain texts; but it has come to be conceded by most competent scholars on the Episcopal side that the texts, on the whole, favor the Puritan idea of the constitution of the early Church, and by those on the other side that the Scriptures lay down a less rigid system and one less defined than was once supposed. The practical question, for a church as for a man, is whether the ground on which it finds itself providentially standing is for its good and can be made to work for good, or whether it involves hurtful limitations from the necessity of the case. The advan-

tages of the isolated position of pure independency are self-evident in this age, when it is so difficult and so unpleasant to be responsible for any one's opinions but one's own. The dangers of such a position for a church must also be evident to thoughtful minds,— the possibility of falling into absolute indifference to the religious interests of all the rest of the world, of saying practically, "I am holier than thou," of refusing to learn from others, to help others, of standing apart in *every* sense because we find it best to stand apart in *some* sense. But I do not think it can fairly be said that these infirmities are of necessity so inherent in the method that they cannot be guarded against and overcome. The system of independency in a church is indeed like that of freedom in a republic in this,— that it implies the necessity of a higher grade of virtue than is demanded by other forms; but in Church as well as State there is no reason why the very demand should not create the supply. And, if we regard the independent position of a church aright, not as meaning a selfish isolation from everything outside its own walls, but as simply disembarrassment from all hindrances to doing the greatest number of desirable things, it at once becomes evident that what seems separation may thus become the widest inclusion. The fault of all the great sects of Protestant America is that they have so little sympathy with or knowledge of the good which is doing in other churches besides their own. In some, this even takes the form of claiming to be the only true Church, its ministers supernaturally qualified, its ordinances the only sacraments, the outside millions heretics and schismatics. What spirit can be more un-American, more contrary to the true temper of modern Christianity, than this? It is a great compensation for

not being exclusively in communion with one sect, if a church can be inclusively in communion with the best of all sects. And this is an opportunity offered peculiarly in our time to an independent church which tries to build on a positive but broad Christianity. I cannot but believe that the little group of churches which are united on this comprehensive basis of accord have a great and providential work to do of reconciliation and of pointing out the spirit and temper in which American Christendom must hereafter take larger shape and freer expression.

This blended inheritance, then, of our church,— of the historic method and forms, on the one hand, that we inherit from the Church of England, which we call, with the founders of this Puritan Commonwealth, "our dear Mother," and of the New England Congregational polity, on the other,— so far from being a source of weakness, ought to be our strength. Each contributes elements of value toward the religious life which should exist within the church itself, and toward the solution of the religious problems which press most earnestly on the mind and life of the present day.

Especially when we add to these — which, after all, being concerned with method and with church order, are external rather than the heart of religion itself — that which lies at the centre and core of all, the *faith* for which the church stands. "A three-fold cord is not easily broken." If we can feel that there is intwined with these threads which bind us thus to the religious life of both Englands, the Old and the New, another, a living line, stretching back through the Christian centuries, and uniting us to the Author and Finisher of our faith; if there is a special interpretation of Christianity, which we believe to emphasize important ele-

ments often depreciated unduly by other Christians,—we shall feel that such a church has a work to do and a place to fill. Now, for such a faith, this church has certainly stood in the past for a century. As I read it in the Book of Prayer in your hands, in the printed sermons of the ministers whose busts look forth from its chancel, and in those others which have been preached from this pulpit by Walker and Dewey and a roll of kindred names, that faith is a very definite, a very broad, a very vital one. It is, first of all, a supreme insistence on character rather than formularies. It says that the Master's test is still the only one that searcheth the marrow of the matter,—"By their fruits ye shall know them."

I do not find, however, that this system of faith stops short at conduct, without furnishing spiritual and religious motives of the loftiest and most moving kind. They are the motives of a simple, an undogmatic but a most earnest Christianity. The God who is the Father of our spirits, the Source and the Inspirer of all our life, the Life Immortal, rooted and grounded in Him, and assured to us in Jesus Christ, the supreme revelation of Himself to us in the Well-beloved Son, with all that this contains and implies of wonder and of power,—in other words, the foundation truths of the Gospel, interpreted by its own light and not tied up to any narrower interpretations than itself, the great truths which the Apostles' Creed, as it is called, upon yonder wall states in the broadly outlined articles of a primitive age,—what more inspiring views of religion, what more earnest inspirations to duty, is it possible to bring to bear upon the soul than these? It is very evident from the signs of the times that religious men in all forms of Christendom are coming to be persuaded that

Christianity must be presented in its simple majesty and unadorned beauty in these essentials which are its heart. It is very evident, also, that hosts of men and women are seeking anxiously to find what the essentials are, and to build upon them. They do not propose to let religion go or to give it up, but they earnestly desire to have a reason for the faith that is in them and to have more faith. At such a time, a church that will hold up with power this simple, broad Christianity of the New Testament, that will live by it and feel it as a power of life, has a mighty work to do for the faith and hope of the community in which it is placed.

And, though we may not make for ourselves the high claim that we have been equal to so great a trust, surely something can be done in this direction by a church which has from the beginning shaped its formularies to accord with the merciful largeness of the gospel, and which prays that God's "Holy Church . . . may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may . . . hold the faith in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace." Is there not reason to believe that this King's Chapel — the church, as Dr. Freeman said a hundred years ago, of the King of kings — may have a place to fill and a function to fulfil to-day and here? The broad conciliation, yet positive affirmation of its worship, the honor of its religious traditions and history, the very way it stands here, full of the best that comes down from the past, yet in the centre and heart of this great modern city and its rushing tides of life, should empower it for such a work. It must stand, simply by the fact of its standing at all, without controversy, but by the very ground of a positive, broad yet vital Christianity on which it is built, as a witness. It testifies that Chris-

tianity means something,— the best and highest thing which this world knows or can hope for. It will speak for Him in whose name its petitions rise, whose Gospel is its only creed and charter; and its only vital concern will be to keep its allegiance unfaltering, "with malice toward none, in charity to all." Its message will be simply that gracious benediction of the apostle, "Peace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Dear friends, I said, in the beginning, that we have a treasure and a trust. By all that this inheritance of worship and faith gives us, we are called to use them for God. And we fitly join in our thought of these things the memory of those who helped to give them to us. Before we close this service, we shall hear one who has a special right to speak of the lessons of character and conscience which the world is the better for reviving in its recollection. The men are not so many, in any age, who are ready to be simply true, at any cost, without ostentation or self-seeking, but that we need to be braced and invigorated by the thought of them. The faithfulness and rectitude, the quiet "courage of his convictions," the serene and happy trust which came from a good conscience and a kind heart, speak to us still from this marble face of Dr. Freeman. They are not simply memories, they should be inspirations. Let us not "build the sepulchres of the prophets," but living memorials, in a church true to its great traditions, loyal to its inspiring memories, aglow with the hopes and inspirations of a large and generous faith and hope and charity.

ADDRESS.

At this late hour, you cannot wish me to detain you long; and I will endeavor to be brief. My friend, your pastor, has asked me to speak; and I will say a few words concerning the character of Dr. Freeman.

No one ever saw him without being impressed by his appearance, by the charm of his conversation, by the benevolence manifested in his looks and words, the sagacity of his remarks, and the tone of truth, honor, and noble sentiment which appeared in all he said.

He was a good deal like Dr. Franklin in the quiet humor of his conversation, as well as in the good sense of his judgments.

Dr. Walker, whom we all recollect as a very wise man, once told me that Dr. Freeman was the wisest man he ever knew.

There was nothing small about him,— no touch of envy or jealousy. On the contrary, he welcomed with cordial admiration preachers whose eloquence eclipsed his own. He was a great admirer of Buckminster, and was one of the first to recognize and call attention to the great qualities of Channing, Horace Holley, Edward Everett, and James Walker.

When the Twelfth Congregational Church was formed in the west part of the city, with Mr. Samuel

Barrett as its pastor, Dr. Freeman advised some parishioners of his own, living in that neighborhood, to leave his church and join that of Mr. Barrett. "You are young people," he said. "Go there, and grow up with them; for they are young people, too."

I recollect that Dr. Spurzheim, the phrenologist, came to Newton to see Dr. Freeman, and said afterward: "When I look at his head, I know what he thinks about God. He does not believe that God wishes to send any one down below."

He was very fond of young people, and they of him. He had no children of his own, but was constantly visited by his nephews and nieces,— the children of his sister, Mrs. Davis, and of his brothers; the grand-children of his wife by her first husband, and her nephews and nieces; the Curtis family, the Sullivans and Howards and Sargents. When these young people were around him, his conversation overflowed with pleasant anecdotes and charming utterances.*

It was a remarkable thing for a young man, twenty-six years old, to introduce a reformed liturgy into an Episcopal church, and to induce the proprietors to adopt it by a large majority, after a six weeks' trial. It was partly because the conservative part of the congregation had gone away with the British, and those who remained, having helped to make the nation independent of the British king, saw no harm in making the chapel independent of the British Church. Everything was in a state of solution. It seemed to them that anything

* As Mrs. Freeman's first husband, Samuel Clarke, died when my father was a child, and as he was still a child when she married Dr. Freeman as her second husband, he always treated my father as a son; and my brothers, my sister, and I always called him grandfather, and loved him as such.

might be done which reason would justify. One proof of this is that they really expected that they could get their minister ordained by an Episcopal bishop, and asked Bishop Seabury, of Connecticut, and afterward Bishop Provost of New York, to admit him to orders. When these attempts failed, they proceeded, by his advice, to ordain him themselves, according to primitive usage. This made a loud outcry. I hold in my hand a copy of a protest made at that time, and signed by six Episcopal ministers of New England:—

PROTEST BY SIX EPISCOPAL MINISTERS.

(From the original paper.)

Whereas a certain Congregation in Boston, calling themselves the first Episcopal Church in said town, have, in an irregular and unconstitutional manner, introduced a Liturgy essentially differing from any used in the Episcopal Churches in this Commonwealth and in the United States, not to mention the Protestant Episcopal Church in general; and have also assumed to themselves a power, unprecedented in said Church, of separating to the work of the Ministry Mr. James Freeman, who has for some time past been their Reader, and of themselves have authorized or pretendedly authorized him to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and at the same time most inconsistently and absurdly take to themselves the name and style of an Episcopal Church,—

We, the Ministers of the Protestant Episcopal Church, whose names are underwritten, do hereby declare the proceedings of said Congregation, usually meeting at the Stone Chapel in Boston, to be irregular, unconstitutional, diametrically opposite to every principle adopted in any Episcopal Church; subversive of all order and regularity, and pregnant with Consequences fatal to the Interests of Religion. And we do hereby, and in this public manner, protest against the aforesaid Proceedings, to the end that all those of our Communion, wherever dispersed, may be cautioned against receiving said Reader or Preacher (Mr. James Freeman) as a Clergyman of our Church, or holding any Communion with him as such, and may be

induced to look upon his Congregation in the light in which it ought to be looked upon by all true Episcopalians.

EDWARD BASS,
Of Saint Paul's Church, Newburyport.

NATHANIEL FISHER,
Saint Peter's Church. Salem.

SAMUEL PARKER,
Trinity Church, Boston.

THOMAS FITCH OLIVER,
Saint Michael's Church, Marblehead.

WILLIAM MONTAGUE,
Christ's Church, Boston.

JOHN C. OGDEN,
Queen's Chapel, Portsmouth, N.H.

December, 1787.

I have also here a copy of a newspaper printed in Portland, dated December, 1787, with extracts on the fourth page from the Boston *Centinel* of November 24, containing an account of the ordination and remarks upon it, favorable and unfavorable.

I have also a letter of Mr. Fisher, Episcopal minister of Salem, of an earlier date, strongly dissuading Mr. Freeman from his purpose of becoming an avowed Unitarian, but using chiefly reasons of expediency. He tells him it is a very "*imprudent*" step; that "there are only two Unitarian churches in London. How can one be maintained in Boston?" that, "when the novelty is over, his friends will leave him"; that "he will be considered singular"; that "no ministers will exchange with him."

LETTER FROM REV. MR. FISHER.

(From the original MS.)

SALEM May 27th 1786.

Dear Sir,— By the complexion of your letter, & which, by the By, I do not very well like, if it is a matter fixed in your mind, to be ordained by the Dissenting Clergy, or the People, why apply to Dr. Seabury — why not receive orders in town? But you must be best acquainted with your own purposes and prospects. I only have it to lament, among many others of your good Friends, that you cannot enter by the Door, as *we* Episcopalians stile it. *We* cannot exchange with you; neither do I see how the dissenting Genl can, with propriety: & I am convinced that Your Society will not be benefited by such a Step as you are about to take. Freeman, I am your sincere Friend. let not the hope of reward, nor the fear of suffering ever lead you to do an *imprudent*, to say nothing of a *wrong* thing. I suppose your situation disagreeable; but it may possibly be more so. will any but an episcopal Ordination Entitle you And the people of the Chapel to certain interests & privileges in that house? was it built for a Meeting house, or for a Church, according to the common acceptation of the word? But are you sure that part of your present flock will not be disgusted with your present plan, when it shall have taken place. men are mutable and death may & in time will cut down all the present heads. the most of them you have a right to out live, in point of age; & are you certain that you shall be able to convert numbers? New things generally please for a Season; but I make no doubt your Society, would now, even this day be as well pleased with the old prayer Book as with their New One. this Country is in its Infancy — London affords no more than One or two Unitarian livings — Boston will do well if they can come up half way to London. In short, I take it, you run a great risk in your present plan — you will be Singular; & if, after settlement any difficulties should arise at any time between you and your people, who is, who can adjust them?

But I have said enough, perhaps too much, for any but a real friend to say & I remain,

Dear Sir,

your Most bdt Serv. NATHl FISHER.

On the other hand, I have here a letter from another Salem minister, William Bentley, written after his ordination: —

(From the original MS.)

My very dear friend

This moment I have received by the Salem Gazette, the glorious news of your Triumph over an oppressive enemy — It has raised me into a transport — Have you leisure enough for a friend to give me a few circumstances?

God bless you
you have kept the faith, henceforth, &c.
from your affectionate friend
WM. BENTLEY.

SALEM Tuesday 1787 —
upon the reception of the Gazette of Nov. 26th

To the Reverend James Freeman.
A Christian Bishop
in Boston.

Mr. Fisher's predictions were not fulfilled. More than thirty years after, I, a boy in the minister's pew, well remember the many friends and supporters of Dr. Freeman, who sat in these seats and listened to his discourses. I see them, now, another congregation than that before me. I see them occupying your pews and sitting in your seats. There are the two Wardens, Col. May and Francis J. Oliver; the first Joseph Coolidge and his son, then known as young Joseph Coolidge, whose son again, a third Joseph Coolidge, died a few years since, an octogenarian. There, too, in the pew of the old colonial Governors, then remaining unchanged, sat William Sullivan with his family, the pew being twice as large as any other,—two or three feet higher than the rest,—and with a canopy above it, supported by four columns. And there was William Minot, son of Dr. Freeman's friend, George

Richards Minot; and the Bulfinches and Apthorps and Storers and Dwights, Charles P. Curtis and his family, Daniel Davis and family, John Heard, Thomas Motley, and others.

Dr. Freeman combined qualities usually opposed. Full of sympathy for all, his sympathies never led him to pass the sacred boundaries of truth and justice. His advice was frequently sought by the leaders of the community. He was one of those men who are before their time. His judgment led him to anticipate modern improvements in education, modern discoveries in the arts, and to insist before others on many reforms. He was very early a temperance man, giving his laborers an additional sum of money, instead of the daily ration of rum usual at that time. Honored and beloved, he passed his last days in a peaceful retirement, where he was visited by troops of friends, and was surrounded by the affections of old and young.

One evidence of this is to be found in the letter I hold in my hands, signed by a committee of his parishioners, May, 1829, thanking him for a volume of sermons he had just printed, but not published, and which did not even have his name on the title-page,— one copy of which he had given to each family in the parish: —

LETTER OF WARDENS AND VESTRY OF KING'S CHAPEL TO JAMES FREEMAN, MAY 21, 1829.

REVEREND DR. JAMES FREEMAN:

Reverend and Dear Sir,— The Wardens and Vestry of King's Chapel, have been requested by the Proprietors at their annual meeting to acknowledge your recent act of pastoral kindness, in presenting to each family a volume of sermons. It would add nothing to your knowledge of our respect and veneration for you, to speak of the worth of this volume, in particular, as you know, in what temper of heart and exercise of mind we have received the like instructions from the sacred desk, through a long course of

years. But we are pleased to have this evidence of your kindness in this form; it is a transmissible memorial of yourself: for the contents of the volume and the fact that it bears no outward mark of authorship, sufficiently indicate its origin.

Although we have not the pleasure and the benefit of seeing you as heretofore, in the places of the sanctuary; and cannot, as often as we would, visit you in your place of abode, yet be assured, that we cherish the most respectful and affectionate recollection of our relation to you. We are justly proud of your labors in the ministry; of your example as a teacher; of the effects which your example has produced. We rejoice with you to see what a change has occurred since you became the first teacher in this land of the Unity of God; we personally know that for successive years, you were, beyond the limit of your own parish, the unsupported advocate of a doctrine, now acknowledged in many thriving Churches; a doctrine which conforms to the most enlightened reason; which prescribes the best rules for earthly welfare and the highest hopes of heavenly life.

While we feelingly regret your absence and the cause of it, it is a pleasure to repeat what you well know, that we are happy in the ministry of your Colleague; that your church is, as it should be, a place of worship, well attended, and where those who listen, are, as in days aforetime, admonished and comforted; awakened and consoled.

We most sincerely hope that your days will be prolonged while life can be comfortable to you, and that your unimpaired intellectual vigor may remain a blessing to yourself, to your family connexions, and of grateful pride to your

Affectionate friends and parishioners.

Committee.

FRANCIS J. OLIVER, } *Wardens.*
WM. MINOT, }

Vestrymen.

JOSEPH COOLIDGE,
DAN'L DAVIS,
Wm SULLIVAN,
JOHN HEARD, junr,
THOS. MOTLEY,
JAMES DALTON,
CHARLES P. CURTIS,
SAMl. A. ELIOT,
J. A. LOWELL,
JOHN APPLETON HAVEN,
EDMUND DWIGHT,

BOSTON, May 21, 1829.

And another proof of the grateful memory cherished of his labors and character was the largely attended meeting held April 22, 1859, on the one hundredth anniversary of his birth. His nephew, Captain, afterwards Admiral, Charles Henry Davis, presided; and remarks were made by C. P. Curtis, James Savage, Josiah Quincy, Dr. Gannett, Dr. Bartol, Dr. John G. Palfrey, Dr. Frothingham, and George Ticknor. I will close by quoting some lines read on that occasion: —

We saw his life serene with age,
His heart still pure and mild;
In thought, sagacious as a sage;
In faith, a trusting child.

He gathered thoughts from earth and air,
Took strength from sky and sod.
Each day more sweet, each hour more fair,
With love to man and God.

And thus, through years of growth, assumes
This century-plant of ours,
Its crowning multitude of blooms,
Its spike of snowy flowers.

I add, as a curiosity, a copy of the first draft of his acceptance of the invitation of the Proprietors of the King's Chapel to become their reader, and also of a letter to his father, giving an account of the reformed Liturgy: —

LETTER OF JAMES FREEMAN ACCEPTING THE OFFICE OF READER IN KING'S CHAPEL, SEPT. 26th, 1782.

Gentlemen,— I have received the invitation of the Proprietors of the Chapel, which you have been pleased to communicate to me: and think myself obliged by duty and respect to comply with it upon the terms and conditions specified. I trust the worthy Proprietors of the

Chapel will view with candour the exertions of a very young man, and pardon the imperfections of a person who will always esteem himself peculiarly happy if he has an opportunity to add either to their pleasure or welfare.

I have the honour to be with great respect

Gentlemen

your most obed^{t} and devoted serv^{t}

JAS. FREEMAN.

BOSTON, Sept. 26th 1782.

To

Dr Thomas Bulfinch
&
Mr James Ivers
} *Wardens.*

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY JAMES FREEMAN TO HIS FATHER, DATED JUNE 1, 1785.

I enclose a few sheets of a reformed prayer book which is now printing in town for the use of the church at which I officiate. About seven months ago, having previously secured a majority of my congregation, and having received encouragement from Dr. Chauncey and others of the dissenting clergy, I attempted to introduce an alteration into the church of England liturgy: and have so far succeeded that the church have voted to make use of the reformed prayers for six weeks and to print them. The alterations are principally made according to a plan first suggested by Dr. Samuel Clarke* and lately improved by Mr. Lindsey. What I send will make you sufficiently acquainted with the principles upon which we have proceeded. You will perceive that the Athanasian creed is omitted, and in general every thing which is disputable. The Nicene creed and the thirty-nine articles are also left out; the baptismal service is made almost entirely new, and the communion, burial, and other services corrected in many particulars. The reformation is not so perfect as I could wish; but much is done, and more than I ever expected. In two or three weeks from this time the church will finally pass the vote, whether they will adopt the alterations or not. I flatter myself the decision will be favourable; for out of about ninety families of which the congregation consists, fifteen only are opposed to the reformation. Should the vote pass in the negative, I shall be under the necessity of resigning

* Dr. Samuel Clarke, the celebrated English divine and philosopher, who was an Arian.

my living. Though such an event would be disagreeable, yet it would not deprive me of business; for by the assistance of the clergy in town, most of whom have promised to support me, I should meet with no difficulty in procuring a parish among the congregationalists.

CONCLUDING NOTE.

The record of these special services in commemoration of the centenary of the King's Chapel Liturgy will be fitly concluded with the following passage from the sermon preached in King's Chapel on November 22, 1835, the Sunday after the funeral of Dr. Freeman, by the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, surviving minister of the church:—

"Thus did our late senior minister, by following the dictates of his reason and conscience, become the first preacher in this country of what we hold to be a purified Christian faith; and thus, through the means of his mental integrity and powers of exposition, did the First Episcopal Church in New England become the First Unitarian Church in the New World.

"I mention this not as a matter of boasting, but as an historical fact. He, our departed father, never boasted of it, nor indeed of anything which he ever did or helped to do; and at that time the change in doctrine and service which was effected was not certainly regarded by pastor or people as a subject of triumph, but of serious and arduous duty. No motive of future fame or reputation could have been before them, but only a sense of the great opposition and odium which would press upon them from without, together with a deep resolve to bear up against it. . . .

"A greater outcry from some quarters was made on the occasion of his independent ordination than when

the liturgy was altered and the Unitarian faith was professed at the Chapel. But Mr. Freeman went on quietly in his former course, till its angry echoes died away on his ear. He addressed himself to the duties which were before him, being 'an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,' giving 'attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.' Friends multiplied around him. He saw the opinions to which he had proved himself so true spreading with a sure and healthy growth; and his days flowed on in usefulness, honor, and peace."